



# Philosophy and liturgy part 2: liturgy and epistemology

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## Philosophy and Liturgy Part 2

### Liturgy and Epistemology

**Abstract:** In this article, I summarise recent philosophical work on the philosophy of liturgy. In part 2 of this article, I consider how liturgy can provide a way of knowing God personally. I outline accounts of acquiring phenomenal-knowledge, practical-knowledge and propositional-knowledge by participating in liturgy.

**Keywords:** Liturgy, epistemology, personal-knowledge, phenomenal-knowledge, practical-knowledge, propositional-knowledge

#### Introduction

One of the recurring themes of the recent emerging philosophical work on liturgy is the discussion of how participating in liturgy can be a way of knowing. In the first part of this article on liturgy and philosophy, I discussed the nature of actions which are performed in the context of liturgical worship. Drawing together insights from the recent literature, I suggested that liturgy provides a means of acting, and more specifically, a means of engaging God. A natural question which follows, is how engaging God in this way can help us to know God. In this second article, I consider the question of how liturgy can provide a way of knowing.

Whilst liturgy and epistemology might appear not to be natural conversation partners, as much of the recent work on the philosophy of liturgy has shown, participation in the liturgy of the Church is one of the primary ways that religious believers come to engage God and to know God. In the first part of the article, I gave a detailed overview of what liturgy is and how the term is used in the literature. I suggested that liturgy performed in a religious community consists of some set of partially scripted, partially improvised, bodily, communal actions, which count as instances of engaging God. It's worth reiterating one point for the purposes of the present discussion— liturgy is not something practiced only in formal or traditional Churches. Many of the examples used in the literature are from more formal traditions, however, the insights made are applicable to most instances of liturgy, however formal or informal it may be. Since this article seeks to give an overview of this literature, I will try to be as tradition-neutral as possible, whilst remaining faithful to the original contexts and examples used by those writing on the topic.<sup>1</sup>

#### Knowing God liturgically

Much of the epistemology of liturgy has been shaped by a central shared belief that, as Cuneo puts it, 'the central aim of the Christian life is not to theorize about God but to know God' (2016, 148). Here, I summarise recent work on the epistemology of liturgy by drawing from recent work on what it is to know someone personally.<sup>2</sup> Thus, I suggest, participating in liturgy provides a means of, and an occasion for, knowing God personally. First, following Eleonore Stump (2010), I suggest that a necessary condition for knowing someone personally is having a second-personal experience of that person, which allows us to acquire a kind of non-propositional phenomenal knowledge of them. I then show how liturgy can help to meet this necessary condition for knowing God personally, by outlining recent accounts of experiencing God by participating in liturgy. Secondly, as recent work by Bonnie M. Talbert (2015) has shown, knowing someone *well* requires more than experiencing them second-personally. If we

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<sup>1</sup> Moreover, as a referee points out, there is also some normativity in which specifying which rituals and traditions are appropriate. For instance, as I highlighted in the first part of the article, both Cuneo and Wolterstorff describe some instances of thanking God liturgically as more or less appropriate instances of thanking God. Thus, there may be disagreement between traditions on which liturgies are most appropriate.

<sup>2</sup> For recent work on the epistemology of knowing persons see: Benton 2017; Code 2015; Lauer 2014; Stump 2010 (Chapters 3 and 4); Talbert (2015).

want to see how liturgy can allow us to know God well and not just be acquainted with God, we should consider how liturgy can provide the means for knowing God well. Talbert suggests that knowing another person well requires sharing a number of worlds with them (2015, 198-202), knowing-how to engage them (2015, 196-97), and knowing about them (2015, 197-198). I show how participating in liturgy can help to fulfil these conditions by allowing us to not only know God, but also to know him well.

### **Experiencing God and knowing what God is like**

Whilst analytic epistemology has primarily been concerned with analysing what it is to know some fact (for instance, I know that Paris is in France), some philosophers have argued that not all kinds of knowledge can be reduced to propositional knowledge. For instance, it has been argued, knowing what seeing red is like, or knowing what it is like to be in love, cannot be reduced to propositions. Such knowledge is often called ‘phenomenal knowledge’ or ‘object knowledge’. Stump suggests that in Frank Jackson’s (1982) thought experiment about Mary, the super smart scientist confined to a black and white room with all of the information about colour, what Mary learns in seeing a red tomato for the first time, is something about redness—there is something that it is like to see red, which cannot be captured by knowing only propositions about red.<sup>3</sup>

Stump thinks the same lesson can be applied to our knowledge of persons. She suggests that if Mary were confined to a room with only propositions about other persons, she would learn something new in meeting her mother for the first time, when she has a ‘second person experience’ (2010, 53) of her mother. Stump writes that, ‘[i]n her first direct and immediate encounter with another human being, Mary’s mind is opened to all that we learn and experience in face-to-face contact, the complex give-and-take of interpersonal interactions’ (2010, 53). Moreover, such experiences appear to be necessary for knowing someone personally. In reading only propositions about someone, I might come to know plenty about that person, but until I experience them, I cannot be said to know them. Whilst there are clearly differences between Mary’s experiencing her mother and her experiencing God (she cannot put her arms around God, or see his physical shape), Stump’s insight into the nature of personal knowledge is helpful for our understanding of liturgy. For as some philosophers have supposed, liturgy allows us to experience God second-personally and to gain non-propositional knowledge of what God is like.

Stump suggests that this kind of phenomenal knowledge of persons helps to explain what we come to know in reading narrative. Just as we cannot reduce our knowledge of persons to some set of propositions about a person, a summary of propositions about a piece of literature would fall short of capturing what we come know in engaging with this text. Moreover, Stump suggests, ‘the knowledge of persons is that it can be transmitted by means of stories’ (2015, 217). Telling stories allows us to ‘re-present the experience itself in such a way that he can share the second-person experience to some degree with someone else who was not part of it’ (2015, 217).

This observation, that narratives provide us with a kind of non-propositional personal knowledge has obvious applications to thinking about the epistemology of liturgy. As James K.A. Smith notes, ‘Liturgies are compressed, repeated performance narratives that, over time, conscript us into the story they “tell” by showing, by performing’ (2009, 109). Much of the epistemological discussion of liturgy focuses on how engagement with the narrative of liturgy can provide a way of knowing God. For instance, Stump argues that one of the primary ways in which the Eucharist allows for engagement with God is through the narrative which is contained with it. She writes,

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<sup>3</sup> There are some philosophers who think that what Mary acquires is not a kind of phenomenal knowledge or a kind of propositional knowledge, but, rather, she acquires a kind of know-how of how to identify redness (Lewis, 2004). For an overview of these different accounts, see Ludlow, Nagasawa and Stoljar 2004.

The moving knowledge of persons with respect to Christ mediated by the story which originally brought Paula to second-person experience of Christ is there again for her in every instance in which Paula participates appropriately in the Eucharist. ...every time she participates in the rite, she will find that, however inclined she is to give up on herself or on God, God is still there, still loving her, still wanting her to come into union with himself...with every participation in the Eucharist, Paula will be strengthened for perseverance, in virtue of growing in love of God and in experience of God's continued love and presence to her. (2015, 223-224)

Whilst a narrative model can help to explain the nature of our experience of God in liturgy, care is needed in thinking about how best to capture this kind of narrative experience which takes place. As Nicholas Wolterstorff draws attention to in his earlier work, we cannot think of liturgy only in terms of dramatic re-enactment, since this 'displaces the focus from the actuality of what is presently taking place' (1990, 146); 'The celebrant actually blesses; he does not play the role of Christ blessing' (1990, 146). Cuneo, in his essay on liturgical immersion, attempts to provide such an account, which allows for the role of narrative knowledge, yet does not depict our engagement as mere re-enactment. As he summarizes his position,

Participating in liturgical re-enactment...is not to engage in the activity of reading a narrative-work. It is, rather, to insert oneself into a complex sequence of scripted action performance. In its use of various sensory modalities and bodily movement, it is more similar to both dramatic performance and the observation of such performance...the activity called for is not that of pretending to be a disciple present at the rite or pretending to be present at the rite in one's own person. Rather, what the script calls for is that those assembled attend to and take up a vantage point within the core narrative, screening-off various features of the presentation of this narrative and sometimes certain features of the narrative itself. (2016, 82)

As Cuneo goes on to argue, the purpose of this kind of immersion is for participants to engage with the narrative of the Christian gospel in such a way that their identities are challenged and revised by God through the liturgy (2016, 87).<sup>4</sup> This seems to be very close to Stump's account of narrative experience and liturgy.

Wolterstorff's account of acquiring phenomenal knowledge of what God is like focusing not on the narratives of Christian liturgy, but, rather, on those aspects of God's character that are taken for granted in the repeated practices which we engage in. Wolterstorff focuses on the kind of knowledge that could be gained from our addressing God in liturgy. For instance, in the Episcopal liturgy, the participants use the following words:

Eternal God, heavenly Father,  
*you* have graciously accepted us as living members  
of *your* Son our Savior Jesus Christ,  
and *you* have fed us with spiritual food  
and the Sacrament of his Body and Blood. (Wolterstorff, 2010, 56)

According to Wolterstorff, addressing God in this way can allow us to gain knowledge in virtue of the things we take for granted. Just as in taking for granted that the world existed before we were born, it is possible for us to know that the world existed before we were born, in taking for granted certain things about God through our use of liturgy, we can come to know that God is a

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<sup>4</sup> This account of narrative engagement also comes close to how Smith describes the role of liturgical narrative, which I describe in the next section.

certain way. We can come to know God as being worthy of praise and adoration and as being capable of listening to us:

To participate in engaging God liturgically in the form of addressing God is to take God to be a 'thou' whom it is appropriate to address, to take God to be capable of listening, to take God to be worthy of praise and adoration, to take God to be capable of listening, to take God to be worthy of praise and adoration... (2016, 13)

Wolterstorff sees his position as complementing Stump's account of personal knowledge and liturgy, as well as adding another way in which liturgy allows us to know God. Moreover, even in traditions where no written liturgical script is used, there will be many descriptions of God which are repeated and taken for granted by those participating in the liturgy.

Finally, a further way in which phenomenal knowledge of God has been depicted in the literature is through some kind of direct experience of God, made possible by liturgy. Adam Green and Keith A. Quan (2012) have considered the question of how reading Scripture can occasion shared-attention experiences with God.<sup>5</sup> Whilst their work is not directly related to liturgy, there are obvious extensions. Indeed, in work by Joshua Cockayne et al, (2017) it has been suggested that the Eucharistic meal might be the means of attention sharing between an individual and God. By shared-attention, Green and Quan have in mind the experience of being aware of another person's awareness, a phenomenon which is much discussed in the psychological literature.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, such awareness moves from being dyadic to being triadic in the case that subjects move from attending only to one another, towards mutually attending to some object. In the case of Scripture, Green and Quan suggest that the text might allow for a kind of triadic attention sharing with God, where the words of the Bible act as mutual object perceived between a believer and God, so long as they both aware of one another's awareness. They write that, 'God might, through the Scriptures, direct one's attention to one's pride. ... God might elect for the contents of Scripture to shape a dyadic experience of the divine. Shared attention requires that the agent one is sharing attention with be experienced as present, even if implicitly' (2012, 426). In extending this account of attention sharing, Cockayne et al. (2017) have applied this account to experiencing God through the liturgy and practice of the Eucharist. They argue that just as a passage or text might be the means of mutual object focusing between an individual and God, the words of the liturgical script and the elements might serve as means of mutual object focusing, in which individuals are aware of God's presence and mutually attend to his salvific actions (2017, 187). They suggest that in such an experience, 'what is communicated isn't a set of propositions, but the sacrament will have a different meaning depending on the participant's relation to Christ' (2017, 187).

### **Sharing worlds with God**

Whilst experiencing a person second-personally might be necessary for knowing someone, knowing someone *well* requires a deeper and broader kind of experience of that person. For instance, as Talbert notes, a brief and intense romance often gives the illusion of knowing someone well, but in meeting one another's families, couples can come to the realisation that they don't know each other nearly as well as they imagined and a broadening of the contexts in which they experience one another can broaden and deepen their knowledge of one another (2014, 200). Talbert suggests that knowing someone well is rooted in a kind of acquaintance knowledge, which is made possible by repeatedly experiencing someone in a variety of contexts and environments (2014, 198-202).

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<sup>5</sup> In his earlier paper, Green (2009) gives a more general account of mystical experience of God understood through the lens of shared-attention. These kinds of experience of God might be more prevalent in charismatic and pentecostal Churches, even if no written script is used.

<sup>6</sup> See Seemann (ed.), 2011; Eilan, et al. (eds.), 2005.

In a recent paper, Cockayne and David Efird (forthcoming) have considered how corporate worship might play a role in helping us to know God better in the way Talbert describes. Here, the authors consider how Talbert's criteria for knowing someone personally might be fulfilled by participation in corporate worship. Cockayne and Efird pay particular attention to the question not just of how liturgy can occasion second-personal experiences of God, but how the context of these experiences can be shaped and broadened to provide a variety of shared-worlds between a person and God. Rather than thinking only of liturgy as a means of sharing attention with God, Cockayne and Efird suggest that liturgy also provides a means of sharing attention with other congregants, whilst mutually focusing on God as an object of attention. They suggest two ways in which such experience might improve one's knowledge of God. First, they argue, corporate worship can alter our perception of God—just as experiencing our friends in different social scenarios changes our perception of what they are like, experiencing God alongside other people, with different histories, beliefs and issues, can provide us with a broader and deeper knowledge of what God is like, by allowing us to experience different aspects of God. Secondly, they suggest, worshipping alongside others plays a causal role in what we attend to—thus, in worshipping alongside another person, we are able to be drawn to aspects of God's character and to come to a broader perception of what God is like than we would by worshipping alone. Thus, they suggest, corporate worship might also allow us to correct certain biases we might have about God's character and nature.

### **Knowing how to engage God**

According to Talbert, another important aspect of knowing someone well is that we know-how to engage that person. Like phenomenal knowledge, many philosophers have held that knowing-how to do something (e.g. knowing-how to ride a bike) is not reducible to propositional knowledge.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, as Talbert suggests, knowing-how to engage someone appears to be an important part of knowing them well. In agreement with Talbert, Cuneo observes that, knowing someone personally involves knowing 'how to engage that person' (2014, 369) and thus, 'knowing God consists in (although is not exhausted by) knowing how to engage God' (2014, 369). Cuneo suggests that liturgy allows a person to gain a kind of knowledge-how to engage God, stating that

liturgy makes available act-types of a certain range such as chanting, kissing, prostrating, and eating that count in the context of a liturgical performance as cases of blessing, petitioning, and thanking God...If this is correct, the liturgy provides the materials for not only engaging but also knowing how to engage God. Or more, precisely: the liturgy provides the materials by which a person can acquire such knowledge and a context in which she can exercise or enact it...to the extent that one grasps and sufficiently understands these ways of acting, one knows how to bless, petition, and thank God in their ritualized forms. One has ritual knowledge. (2014, 383)<sup>8</sup>

Thus, building on his account of liturgical action which I outlined in the first article, we can see that if bodily liturgical actions should count as instances of blessing God, thanking God and petitioning God, then repeated engagement in liturgy provides a participant with a kind of personal know-how.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> For a discussion of the reducibility of know-how to know-that, see Noë 2005; Stanley and Williamson 2001.

<sup>8</sup> Wolterstorff also briefly considers the role of know how (2018, 22-23).

<sup>9</sup> Another interesting contribution to this area of ritual epistemology can be found in Dru Johnson's (2016, 2018) work on scriptural epistemology. Johnson approaches the topic as a biblical scholar but draws his work into conversation with contemporary epistemology. As highlighted in part 1 of this article, the question of which actions *count* as instances of blessing, thanking and petitioning God will often be tradition dependent. However, as Cuneo highlights, we can make a difference between successfully thanking God and appropriately thanking God (2016, 157-58). For successfully thanking God, all that is needed is the right sort of intention that one's bodily action

Just as repeatedly engaging with another person allows us to know-how to engage them better (e.g. we might get better at knowing-how to make someone laugh, or feel at ease), repeatedly engaging with God allows us to know-how to engage God better.<sup>10</sup>

This emphasis on practical knowledge in liturgy is something which Smith also stresses, albeit through very different means. As I outlined in the first article, Smith's account of liturgical action focuses on the role of liturgy as engaging with our desire through embodied rituals. In the context of Christian worship, Smith suggests that this kind of action 'is fundamentally formative because it educates our hearts through our bodies (which in turn renews our mind) and does so in a way that is more universally accessible...than many of the overly cognitive worship habits we have acquired in modernity' (2009, 13). He writes,

Discipleship and formation are less about erecting an edifice of Christian knowledge than they are a matter of developing a Christian know-how that intuitively "understands" the world in light of the fullness of the gospel...The practices of Christian worship are the analogue of biking around the neighbourhood, absorbing an understanding of our environment that is precognitive and becomes inscribed in our adaptive unconscious. (2009, 68)

Whilst liturgy provides us with a kind of know-how, unlike Cuneo's account, this is not explained primarily in terms knowing-how to engage God. Rather, on this account, liturgy teaches how to perceive and understand the world in a certain way. For Smith, engagement with narrative provides us with a kind of '*aesthetic* know-how' (2009, 126), which, as he describes it is 'more like "knowing" that someone is flirting with you than knowing someone's shoe size' (2009, 126). Narrative shapes our perception of the world in 'unconscious automated ways' (2009, 126).<sup>11</sup> Yet, this account of know-how also allows us to encounter God in a certain sense. Smith explains that

the conceptual metaphors that are "carried" in liturgical practices will, over time, sediment into our background in ways that are more aesthetic than logical, more poetic than didactic. Carried in such practices will be conceptual metaphors that prime us to immediately see God, the world, and others in certain ways. (2009, 123)

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counts as thanking God. The question of appropriate thanking is a question which may depend on the particular tradition one is participating in. Moreover, there will be some disagreement between traditions concerning just which instances of thanking God are most appropriate.

<sup>10</sup> A major barrier to the plausibility of Cuneo's thesis is the question of whether or not intellectualism is true. The disagreement between intellectualism (the thesis that all knowing is a species of knowing *that*) and anti-intellectualism (the thesis that it is not the case that all knowing is a species of knowing *that*) is a complex and contentious issue that Cuneo can certainly not hope to resolve in twenty pages. However, he gives some considerations in favour of what he describes as his 'moderate view' (2014, 371), namely, that knowing-how is 'a sequence of act types that an agent can perform', such as 'Performing a work of music, swimming the crawl...and offer[ing] thanks to God' (2014, 371). However, regardless of whether or not intellectualism is true, Cuneo's thesis is still important. Cuneo admits that his is not the only way of understanding practical knowledge, and states that 'those unsympathetic with the moderate position—say, those who identify knowing how with a special sort of knowing that—should feel free to attempt to translate what I say into the idioms that belong to their favored version of knowing how' (2014, 370). Even if know-how is reducible to knowledge-that, typically the intellectualist understands gaining know-how as an example coming to know a proposition in a 'practical mode of presentation' (Stanley and Williamson, 2001, 427) or 'practical way of thinking' (Stanley, 2011, 130). Even this very thin notion of knowing-how, however, is compatible with Cuneo's thesis—the individual improves her epistemic state by learning how to ride a bike.

<sup>11</sup> Much of the philosophical literature on liturgy overlaps and conflicts with work by ritual theorist. There is a varying degree of success in the critical engagement with this literature. Sadly, there is not space here to unpack the engagement between these two literatures.

This account is very close to Coakley's position on liturgical epistemology. Like both Cuneo and Wolterstorff, Coakley suggests that liturgy primarily gives us a kind of knowledge-by-acquaintance or knowledge-by-relationship (2013, 134). However, she suggests that our personal knowledge of God made possible by engagement with liturgy is not like the immediate knowledge which is acquired through perception. But, rather, our acquaintance knowledge of God is acquired slowly through the repetition of certain practices so that we can come to know how to rightly relate to God and to see God.<sup>12</sup> She writes that,

the specific, bodily ways in which Christians seek to “perceive” God through liturgy involve a range of ramified practices (including hymnody; or “walking in patterns”...) that are not merely straightforward analogies of “perception” in “immediate” response to God, but complex means of *training* the mind and senses, over time, in order to come into a right relation with God (2013, 137-38).

Smith uses the language of *tuning* to explain how such transformation takes place (2009, 137). Because the liturgies of culture often tune us to see the world in a way which ‘run[s] counter to what God envisions for the flourishing of creation’ (2009, 141), we need to be re-tuned by the liturgy, which, he suggests, acts as a kind of ‘counter-liturgy’ (2009, 149) to the liturgies of sin; ‘Christian worship is an intentionally decentring practice, calling us out of ourselves into the very life of God’ (2009, 149). Both Coakley's and Smith's accounts, combine aspects of practical knowledge and phenomenal knowledge—by acquiring knowledge-how to relate properly to God, we are able to see the world and God in a new way, and thereby, come to know what God is like.

Finally, as I highlighted in part 1 of this article, whilst liturgy always involves some kind of script (regardless of how formal this is) it also always involves some level of improvisation. Indeed, whilst many of the examples used in the literature focus on formal Church liturgies, in the case of more informal worship, in the Pentecostal tradition, for instance, the balance is weighted more heavily towards improvisation than scriptedness. Whilst this is an area which hasn't been directly addressed in the literature, the importance of liturgical know-how seems particularly important in communities in which there is little or no written script. In such a context, one must learn how to improvise appropriately, without the aid of a script to guide one's actions. As Smith describes, in any ritual community, there is an irreducible ‘logic of practice’ which resists propositional reduction, and which can only be learnt by becoming embodied in that community (2013, 76-79). This seems worthy of further exploration in the context of more informal liturgy.

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<sup>12</sup> As a referee helpfully points out, whilst repetition might help to form ritual knowledge, not all religious rituals are repetitive. Baptism and circumcision happen only once, for instance. And so, this analysis will not straightforwardly explain the epistemology of all liturgy. Whilst there is not space for a detailed discussion of this point, it is important to note here that even if some liturgical events happen only once, they are embedded in a wider liturgical story and form part of a wider community. Thus, whilst the baptism ritual happens only once in a person's life, it is repeated many times within a community, so some repetition may still be present. Moreover, just as a marriage is a one-time event in a relationship which has a profound effect on one's know-how of one's spouse, baptism can play a significant role in one's knowing-how to engage God, even if it is not repetitive. The reason being (I assume) is because both events (baptism and marriage) are rituals which involve one's commitment to the task of engaging the other person repeatedly for the rest of one's life. Additionally, as Cuneo describes it, the baptismal rite is ‘one in which the one baptized is understood to undergo transformation’ (2016, 171) in which one becomes disposed toward forming certain character traits and forming a greater understanding of Gospel (2016, 181). Such states are developed by the Holy Spirit and the community in relation to the baptized (2016, 182). Thus, if such a transformation takes place, one would surely be more disposed to engage God more, and thereby, to know-how to engage God more.



## Knowing about God

Finally, whilst knowing about someone is not sufficient for knowing someone, it does appear to have some importance, especially for knowing someone well. As Talbert suggests, engaging with a person, and knowing-how to engage them gives us a great deal of propositional knowledge about that person. For example, we can know what she has ‘thought, felt, said, done, perceived, and such in our presence’ (2005, 198).

However, it is interesting to note that work on liturgy as a means of knowing *about* God has been the least developed area of liturgical epistemology. Indeed, many of those working in this area are keen to stress that liturgy does not primarily give us information about God. For example, Cuneo notes that ‘Christianity is not a body of propositions. Its fundamental aim is not to produce agents that form warranted beliefs about God’ (2016, 147-48). And Smith writes, ‘Being a disciple of Jesus is not primarily a matter of getting the right ideas and doctrines and beliefs into your head in order to guarantee proper behaviour...given the sorts of animals we are, we pray *before* we believe, we worship before we know—or rather, we worship *in order* to know’ (2009, 33-34). Whereas the vast majority of philosophy of religion concerns itself with analysing the rational defensibility of religious beliefs or explicating the content of Christian doctrine, the philosophy of liturgy has resisted this point of focus. There are good reasons for this. Focusing only on what we can know about God falls short of knowing God, and so focusing only on the propositional content of the Christian faith falls short of giving an analysis of the Christian faith.

Coakley (2013), in her short essay on truth in liturgy, briefly suggests some ways in which liturgy might allow us to acquire propositional knowledge. She suggests that, it might be the case that ‘ordinary propositional truth *is* at stake’ (2013, 133) in the liturgy through the recitation of the propositions of Nicene Creed, for instance. She writes that, ‘it could in principle also be that liturgy, in virtue of certain repetitive belief-forming practices, could actually mount some kind of “justification” thereby for beliefs’ (2013, 134). Coakley quickly moves on from this suggestion to consider a ‘deeper’ kind of truth which is acquired through encountering God personally through liturgy, yet her brief remarks provide some account of how propositional beliefs might be formed and justified through liturgy.

Moreover, whilst, as we have seen, Wolterstorff’s primary concern is to give an analysis of liturgy and phenomenal knowledge of God, his account could easily be amended to fill out Coakley’s suggestion in more detail. Wolterstorff notes that ‘one can use these terms to make declarations about God. But that’s not how they are used when they are incorporated into address to God’ (2017, 13). However, it seems reasonable to think that in coming to know God as almighty in successfully addressing God as almighty, one might also come to know that God is almighty. Indeed, given that Wolterstorff suggests that ‘[t]he better one understands the meaning of the addressee-identification terms used when addressing God liturgically, the deeper one’s knowledge of God—assuming that the terms fit God’ (2017, 14), it would seem to follow that one could also come to know *about* God through the repetition of addressee-identification terms.

Whilst there is little work explicitly concerned with giving an account of knowing about God through liturgy, much of what is said assumes that such knowledge follows other kinds of knowing, be that phenomenal or practical knowledge. Smith’s concern, for instance, is to shift the focus from an overly cognitive understanding of what worship is for to be reframed by his anthropology of human beings as desiring, embodied creatures. Yet, the implication of much of the liturgical epistemology I have considered is not that belief is not important, but, rather, that belief about God is acquired as a result of our embodied practical-knowledge and our knowledge of what God is like and not the other way around. Smith suggest that, rather than thinking of doctrine informing our understanding of practice, we should rather think that “Doctrines” are the cognitive, theoretical articulation of what we “understand” when we pray’ (2009, 70). Nevertheless, it still remains true that these connections have not been developed fully in the

literature, at least not by all of the philosophers cited here, and the question of how liturgy furnishes our beliefs about God is a question which deserves further exploration.

### **Future directions for the philosophy of liturgy**

The philosophical study of liturgy is a very recent phenomenon and there is much still to be said in this important area of study. Indeed, in this short article, I have sketched just two areas that this literature has engaged with, but there are many other issues which there has not been space to outline.

I have already noted the lack of focus on propositional knowledge and liturgy, particularly in the analytic literature. This area of work points to a deeper, more fundamental issue, which Wolterstorff points out: 'It would be desirable to have a comprehensive discussion of the ways in which we come to know God liturgically; such a discussion would identify and analyze the different ways, and it would show how these different ways interact with each other' (2017, 9). I've suggested that much of the work concerning liturgical epistemology fits more broadly under the umbrella of personal epistemology. However, the literature on knowing other persons is as recent and underdeveloped (if not more so) than the literature on liturgy. Thus, to really make progress in understanding how liturgy can allow us to know God personally, it would be beneficial to have a firmer grasp on the nature of personal knowledge, more generally.

Another epistemological issue which could benefit from further development is the social dimension of knowing liturgically. Whilst the work on liturgical action has focused on some of the issues involved in acting together, the same kind of attention has not been given to thinking about how the social dimension of liturgy impacts our understanding of epistemology. The vast literature on group knowledge and common knowledge appears to present a ripe array of conceptual analyses which have obvious and important applications to our understanding of liturgical epistemology.

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